

OUR APOLOGETIC TASK

I. INTRODUCTION

G.W. Leibniz the famous philosopher and mathematician asked a question. “why is there something rather than nothing?” or why does anything exist at all when it is highly more probable that nothing should exist? In (Genesis 1.1) the Bible opens with “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” At the onset the Bible assumes God’s existence and creative action. According to (John 1.1-3) he was before all things. He made all things that were made i.e. time, space, the material universe as well as thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. (Colossians 1.16-19) He created them and for his good pleasures do they exist. Leibniz’s question is simple, if no God exists then how is this universe possible?

In lesson 16 dealing with the inspiration of the scriptures of Pastor Bryan’s *From this Generation For Ever* series he includes a conversation he and I had stating; “In seeking to save the doctrine inspiration from how it had been “stigmatized” by its critics, modern Theologians failed to adequately meet the critics accusations. The critics claim the Bible is not of divine origins and sight the “human elements” as their proof. If God created humans he can certainly use their individual styles and vocabulary to record his word. How does changing the definition of dictation or just backing away from it all together solve the critics accusations of the Bible not being a divine book? The real issue is, IS THERE A GOD TO DICTATE?”

- The reason I bring this up is to bridge the gap between what pastor is doing and what I am seeking to do. In his class Pastor has been dealing with issues related to the Word of God, and what qualifies it as such. Its inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority, self-authenticating nature, cannon and God’s promise to preserve it throughout all time. He is building an apologetic case for the KJB and the everlasting authority of the scriptures. But I am taking a slightly different approach. The Bible claims God exists and that he has certain attributes. But do these claims correspond to reality, or is there a God to write his word?

So for the next few weeks we will be looking at issues pertaining to the existence of God, the reliability of the Christian truth claims and the applications of Christian Apologetics.

Background

I attended a private Christian school where I was educated classically. I was required to take Formal Logic, Rhetoric and Apologetics in high school among other classical English classes. It was in high school that I discovered my love for Apologetics. Since then I taught a small group of collage age for a year, then a nine week study for the teen group at Heritage Baptist Church, and have taught some to the teens here at Grace as well. It has become passion for me because, I saw what it did in strengthening my faith and what it could do for others. I would like to share with you some of the things I have learned in the hopes it will edify and inform you.

II. Our Apologetic Stance

- A. I believe that all Christians have a spiritual responsibility to articulate their faith.
 - II Tim 2.15, 24-26 – Study, teach, exhort (use words or arguments to incite good works), Reprove (charge with a fault, excite a sense of guilt), rebuke (a chiding, in scripture, affliction for the purpose of restraint and correction)
1. Such responsibility demands that we understand basic philosophical and theological truths.

II Tim 2.15, 3.14

 - II Tim 3.14-4.5 – This call to preach and evangelize starts with the knowledge of the word.
2. Although, we may not need to know philosophy in the formal sense; some basic understanding is extremely beneficial if we are to do apologetics **well**.

B. What apologetics is not.

- It is not to say sorry or please forgive me.
- It is not fighting or quarreling with people
- It is not permission to believe in God

C. What Apologetics is; **Apologetic** or **Apologetical** position comes from the Greek word **apologia** meaning defense.

- Apologia can mean either a formal defense or an informal defense.
- Helps provides a rational defense of a Christian faith against intellectual objections.
- It is an attempt to establish certain elements of the Christian FAITH as reasonable but more importantly true, in today's world, or simply the defense of the Christian truth-claims.

II Cor 10.3-5. Cast(violently destroy), Reckoning(reasoning. Such as is hostile to the Christian faith)

Princeton theologian J. Gresham Machen once warned

“False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the Gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation to be controlled by ideas which prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.”

I would have as much luck in preaching the gospel to you in German, as preaching to an audience who has already wrote Christians and their book off as a bunch of nuts. When a culture systematically destroys all thoughts that entertain the

notion of God, its people will be hard pressed to see anything related to God as a viable option. The Gospel clearly has power but that power is not without its limits since not everyone who hears, believes.

1. Apologia is used in the following passages.
 - Acts 25:16-“answered/answer” formal defense
 - Acts 22.1 – “Defense”
 - II Cor 7:11-“clearing of yourselves”
 - Phil. 1:7,17-“defense”
 - II Tim 4:16-“answer” formal defense
 - I Cor 9:3-“answer” defense
 - Probably the most well know is I Peter 3:15 “be ready always to give an answer” Compare to II Tim 2.15, 24-25, 4.2-5 this points us back to the fact that all Christians are called into the ministry.

D. If we study these passages among others thoroughly I would suggest our **apologetical task** has three parts.

1. To defend the faith against objections or alternate worldviews II Cor 10.3-5
2. To communicate the Gospel II Tim 2.24-25
3. Confirm the truth of the Gospel to yourself Heb 11.1-3

III. Apologetic arguments

- An Argument is the presentation of facts, figures, statistics and evidence in favor of your view or belief.

1. Presuppositionalistic Apologetics—start with presuppositions, these are ideas assumed true out right then use these to infer other truths

- Presuppositional apologetics states that all systems of thought start with presuppositions. We should place the authority of scripture above neutrality, empirical evidence, subjective feelings and man’s logic/wisdom, or run the risk of subjecting the Bible to a higher authority.(Similar to what Pastor has been teaching)
- God exists
- He has seen fit to reveal himself
 - By the living word (Jesus Christ) (John 1.1-3,14)
 - By the Written word (scripture) (II Tim 3.16-17)
 - By nature (Psalms 19.1-4)
 - By his providential/miraculous acts (Acts 1.3)
- His word is true and reliable
- As stated earlier Apologetics is not permission to believe the Truth claims of the scripture but should be used as support of what God has said.

2. Cosmological Argument –

Cause and effect – everything that begins to exist must have a sufficient cause; since the universe began to exist the universe therefore must have a sufficient cause and that cause is God.

- Defenders included; Aristotle, Plato, Thomas Aquinas, Charles Hodge, Norman Geisler.

3. Teleological Argument – The argument that the existence of order or design or extreme complication or purpose in the world implies the existence of an intelligent designer.

You can boil the Teleological to “Design implies a designer.”

One of the main areas of argument in this area is Intelligent design, under this there are many different facets that point to the universe being designed.

1. Thomas Aquinas, Michael Behe

4. **Axiopistic or Evidentialist Apologetics**-Reasoning from the particular to the general

- **Empirical data**—the use of the 5 senses as the logical starting point for understanding truth.
Ex. Archeology proves Bible is reliable. Therefore we can trust what it says about Theology
- **Axiom**—self-evident proposition, taken for granted as being true. From them we infer other truths.
Ex. All men are created equal. This is because the Triune God has spoken. (moral argument)
 1. Josh McDowell, John Warrick Montgomery, Clark Pinnock, C.S. Lewis

As Christians we are committed to the truth. That is the essence of who God is (the one true God), and his word is truth. We can know truth because his word is truth and truth is that which corresponds to reality. His word corresponds to reality, so in all categories we will see what scripture claims. Then we will look to see if we find correspondence in the universe by looking at the sciences and philosophy.